



Queen Anne Cobblestone

The Newsletter of the Queen Anne Historical Society

January 2015

Guest Speaker:

Diana James

Diana James will present an informative talk on the history of women developers in Seattle, particularly those who built apartment buildings. James is the author of *Shared Walls: Seattle Apartment Buildings, 1900-1939*, who notes, "They were a way of life, more than anything."



*Diana James in front of one of the apartment buildings she writes about.
Photo: Diana James*

January 22, 7 pm
Queen Anne Christian Church
1316 3rd Avenue West, Seattle, WA

The church is on the southeast corner of 3rd West and Lee. Light refreshments follow.

CHECK OUR WEBSITE

We continue to improve our website (www.qahistory.org), including better organization of our historical database and images. Like us on Facebook and follow us on Twitter.

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Society Celebrates Anniversary of the publication of *Queen Anne: Community on the Hill*

By Michael Herschensohn, PhD.

It has been nearly 25 years since a committee of the Queen Anne Historical Society began the work on the production of a book about the history of our neighborhood. Led by historian Kay Reinartz, Ph.D., the eight member Community Editorial Advisory Committee produced a 233 page chronicle, *Queen Anne: Community on the Hill*, tracing the growth of a Native American hunting grounds into one of Seattle's most dynamic neighborhoods.



Photo: Puget Sound Maritime Historical Society

The book divides into two parts. The 11 chapters follow a strictly chronological outline of events from 1851 through 1929. The second part begins with the full-page photograph of the 1931 passage of the last tall ship, the *Monongohela*, through the ship canal before the completion of the George Washington Memorial Bridge. Opened in 1932 and known locally as the Aurora Bridge, it certainly changed how people moved about the hill. The first two of the nine last chapters follow the chronological sequence ending with the 1993 creation of the Queen Anne's Urban Village, an event still shaping the history of the hill.

The balance of the book is organized thematically with sections on schools, churches, hospitals, businesses, architectural history (including apartment buildings) and community life. A supremely ironic essay by Del

Loder ends the volume. Entitled *Staying on Queen Anne Forever*, it recounts the history of funeral homes, casket and tombstone vendors and cemeteries. It includes a cheerful vignette documenting the \$62.50 cost of burial at Mount Pleasant Cemetery in 1888 and concludes the chapter and the book with this Latin citation: *Sic Transit Gloria Mundi*. These words translate as "so passes worldly glory." They remind us of the transitory nature of life and earthly honors and end *Queen Anne: Community on the Hill* with a giggle.

A celebration of the book begins with the society's public meeting on March 26 and continues with May 28 meeting.

Look for updates to sections of the book in the monthly articles the society publishes in the *Queen Anne Magnolia News*. The first update appeared on January 14 and is reprinted in this issue of the *Cobblestone*.

Queen Anne Historical Society

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New Parks Shape Our Community

By John Hennes with updates by Michael Herschensohn

This article is excerpted from the book *Queen Anne: Community on the Hill* published in 1993 by the Queen Anne Historical Society. It appears here with some updates. As we celebrate the 20th anniversary of the book's publication, we will regularly republish articles. Thanks forever to John Hennes.

On Queen Anne the issue of parks has always brought out the community in its attempts to balance development with preservation.

A field house had long been sought for Queen Anne. In 1936 the Queen Anne Community Clubhouse (now The Seattle Gym) on Queen Anne Avenue was proposed by the Council of Queen Anne Clubs for conversion to a field house suitable for official park activities, but the proposal did not succeed.

The focus for a field house location moved to the West Queen Anne Playfield, commonly known as Howe Field, located between First and Second avenues W. and W. Blaine and Howe streets. The dirt field had been the location of Harry Treat's stable and track. It was used every fall for Queen Anne High School football practice from the late 1920's through 1958 when Luther Memorial Field (now the location of John Hay Elementary) opened.

The site gained support, and plans to vacate the area north of W. Howe Street for a field house and community building were pursued. But a strong reaction to the incipient loss of houses led, in 1946, to a petition drive opposing extension of the field. A counter-statement from a wide variety of school and youth groups contained endorsements for the expansion.

Finally, in 1948, following much community input, the plans for a field house were authorized at the West Queen Anne Playfield. On April 28, 1950 the Queen Anne field house was opened. It was the work of Naramore, Brady, Bain and Johansen architects. A dance for Queen Anne High School students followed that evening, kicking off years of youth activity.

Landscape architects Richard Haag and Associates designed the expansion of West Queen Anne Playfield which included the area between Second and Third avenues W. and was financed by the passage of the Forward Thrust bond issue in February 1968. In 1972 the Queen Anne Recreation Center, as the complex of field and field house was then called, was completed.

Funds for the Queen Anne Swimming Pool were also part of the Forward Thrust bond issue. A pool to serve the Queen Anne-Magnolia area had been a goal for decades, but all proposed locations met with controversy. The West Queen Anne/McClure Junior High site was the ultimate choice. Ten homes were razed along First Avenue W. between W. Howe and W. Crockett streets. In 1977, after a cost of \$846 thousand plus the land purchases, the Queen Anne Pool was opened. The building was designed by Benjamin F. McAdoo, Jr. (1920-1981), the first African-American architect to operate a long-term practice in the state of Washington.

As far back as the 1904 Olmsted Report, there were proposals for waterfront parks along Elliott Bay. That report recommended acquiring land at the foot of Denny Way. It also suggested a Harbor

View Park in the area bounded by First Avenue, John and Bay streets, and the water, including the high bluffs there and the railroad tracks, then on trestles. In 1968, Myrtle Edwards Park was developed from Bay Street N. to Pier 88, the old rock-fill pier at Smith Cove.

The Forward Thrust vote also included funds for two neighborhood mini parks, Mayfair Park and "Bhy" Kracke Park. Mayfair Park, at Second Avenue N. and Raye Street, fits into the side of a northeast Queen Anne Hill ravine. It occupies 16,448 square feet and contains a variety of small park environments. "Bhy" Kracke Park, at 5th Avenue N. just north of Highland, is named for Werner H. "Bhy" Kracke, who lived for years on the park's upper-most level. He died in 1971 before fulfilling his promise to donate the site for a city park and \$20,000 for its development. Its unique design, by landscape architect Roy Lehner, features a steep winding trail linking the lower level containing the playground to the middle and upper levels whose winding paths provide 'surprise vistas' to the Cascades, Lake Union and downtown Seattle.



Landscape architect Roy Lehner designed "Bhy" Kracke Park's twisting pathways to capture surprise views.
Photo: M. Herschensohn.

Continued: New Parks Shape Our Community

Marshall Viewpoint, the park across the street from Parsons Gardens overlooking the Sound, was a gift to the city in 1960 from George and Margaret Marshall. A section of the park had been named in honor of Admiral Thomas S. Phelps, who in 1855 was aboard the gunboat Decatur during the "Battle of Seattle."

Several sections of sidewalk by Northwest artists (Mark Tobey, Guy Anderson, Morris Graves, Margaret Thomkins, Kenneth Callahan, Victor Steinbrueck, Richard Gilkey, Harold Balazs and Charles Stokes) and a tiny sculpture by James Washington, Jr., are a memorial to Betty Bowen, a civic leader and preservationist who lived nearby at 715 W. Prospect St., now a designated city landmark.

President's Letter By Michael Herschensohn

The last month has been busy. We are very happy to report that Alicia Comstock Arter has stepped forward to volunteer as our Archivist. She replaces Verna Ness who has held the post for a long time. Alicia is by profession a journalist who was attracted to archival matters through Historic Seattle's Digging Deeper program which visits regional archives throughout the year. Alicia is a lifelong resident of Queen Anne and brings great enthusiasm to this important role. She is quick to point out that she is not related to the Comstock of the eponymous street.

Under Verna Ness's care our archives improved dramatically. Under her direction and with the help of Priscilla Rice, our collection has been inventoried and culled, removing items that do not conform to our Collections Policy, e.g.: Ballard High School yearbooks. We have also taken care of our map collection which is now stored in flat map drawers.

Kerry Park Outlook on W. Highland Drive between Second and Third Avenues W., was enhanced in 1971 by Changing Form, a well-loved sculpture by Doris Totten Chase (1923-2008) and donated by the children of Albert Sperry Kerry, Sr. The park has gone by various names. Called Franklin Place when George Kinnear first donated a parcel to the city in 1904, it became Kerry Park in 1927 when A.S. Kerry Sr., donated land that brought it to 1.4 acres. The city's website now calls the upper portion Kerry Viewpoint. The lower portion on W. Prospect Street named Bayview-Kinnear Play Park and under which lies a large water tank, recently received a new playground and landscaping.

Most dramatically, the 140 oral histories in our collection have been moved from vulnerable reel to reel tapes and are now safely copied in multiple digitized copies stored at multiple sites on hard and flash drives and compact disks. Logs of all those histories are available on our website at www.qahistory.org.

I am very pleased to report two new members of the society's board Kristi Jutras-Street and Heather Miller. I invite you to join us on January 22, our next public meeting See details above. I am also looking forward to an exciting presentation in March by Kim Myran who in 1993 authored Part I of the chapter of Queen Anne: Community on the Hill entitled "Apartments and Development on the Hill." Her talk fits neatly with the multi-family building theme of this year's public meetings and ties in well with our celebration of the 25th anniversary of the publication of our book.

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"KINNEAR HOME"

Kim's Musings

By Kim Turner, Chair of Research Committee

Here we are in another new year carrying much in the way of the familiar. Serving on several committees for the Queen Anne High School Alumni Association along with the Queen Anne Historical Society allows interesting tidbits from the past to come my way. The following comes from an article by 1946 grad Cliff Skelton, who was writing about Vern Emery, a YMCA Secretary for the QA community.

At that time the neighborhood YMCA was housed in the former church in the 1500 block of Queen Anne Avenue, Sydney Strong's purview. This was for many years the Queen Anne Congregational Church, (1516 Queen Anne Ave.) and went through many changes. Skelton referred to the building as "very old, leaky-roofed, converted church." This description was

from the 1940's; the building was only 30+ years old at that time. In 1927, the adjacent site (1530 QA Ave.) was built, housing the Queen Anne "Community Club, and, during the Great Depression, the local YMCA quarters. The Federal Old Line Insurance firm was there for many years, then KIRO-TV, whose tower was built next door about 1957, on the site of the old church. The building more recently has housed both the Pasta Bella Italian Restaurant and a fitness center downstairs. The building stands firmly on the same site today, with a sea of changed buildings all around it. It is a good testimonial to the construction techniques of the past, and a noble building to add to the color and continuity of Queen Anne Hill.

Happy New Year 2015, Everyone!
Kim R. Turner, Researcher, QAHS

Renew Membership

The society mailed requests in mid-December to all our members for membership renewal. There are still some people who have not yet renewed for 2015. You can rejoin the Queen Anne Historical Society on our website www.qahistory.org using PayPal or by sending a check to P.O. Box 19432, Seattle WA 98109-9432. Dues are \$8 for seniors, \$20 for individuals and \$25 for families. Students are invited to join free of charge, while seniors who can afford it are encouraged to join at the 'adult' rates. Several renewing members have joined at the \$100 level. Their gifts make a huge difference. The society's board joins me in thanking those super generous members.